DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 058 161 SP 005 468

TITLE	A Systematic Approach to Inservice Training for Teachers in Learning Disabilities.
INSTITUTION	Merrimack Education Center, Chelmsford, Mass.
PUB DATE	Nov 71
NOTE	22p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*Educational Objectives; *Inservice Education; *Learning Disabilities; *Staff Improvement; *Systems Approach; *Teacher Education

ABSTRACT

This document is focused on the various aspects of establishing a systematic approach to the inservice training mini-course in learning disabilities for classroom teachers. The training model is exemplary of a 4-hour, intensive training course designed and conducted by staff and consultants for the Merrimack Education Center. Its purpose is to serve as a resource, specifically for persons involved in establishing inservice training courses in local school districts and for school agencies, school districts, intermediate offices, and others responsible for inservice training. It spells out the objectives of the mini-course and cites an example of one instructional phase of the course outline as well as the evaluation design. One of the major objectives of this course is to demonstrate to teachers a systematic approach in building instructional programs beginning with the pre-assessment and instructional activities and continuing through the post-assessment. The task of designing a complete training course for learning disabilities is infinite; therefore, this systematic approach is meant to serve as a model for the building of training programs to meet locally specified objectives, which have been identified as pertinent to the instructional process. A selected bibliography of ERIC documents relating to learning disabilities is included. (Author/MBM)

ED058161

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A Systematic Approach To In-service Training for Teachers in LEARNING DISABILITIES

Merrimack Education Center
101 Mill Road
Chelmsford, Massachusetts 01824

SP005468

DOCUMENT RESUME

TITLE

A Systematic Approach to an In-Service Training Program for Classroom Teachers in Learning Disabilities

SOURCE

Merrimack Education Center (TITLE III, ESEA)
101 Mill Road, Chelmsford, Massachusetts 01824

DESCRIPTORS

in-service education: training programs; staff development; learning disabilities; systematic approach: educational objectives in learning disabilities in-service

RESUME

This document is focused on the various aspects of establishing a systematic approach to the in-service training "mini-course" in learning disabilities for classroom teachers. This training model is exemplary of a four-hour, intensive training course designed and conducted by staff and consultants for the Merrimack Education Center (MEC), Title III-ESEA. Its purpose is to serve as a resource, specifically for those persons involved in establishing in-service training courses in local school districts and generally for school agencies, school districts, intermediate offices, and others responsible for in-service training of teachers. It spells out the objectives of this particular "mini-course", cites an example of one instructional phase of the course outline, and the model for building the course outline as well as the evaluation design.
One of the major objectives of this course is to demonstrate to teachers a systematic approach in building instructional programs beginning with the (1) pre-assessment, (2) instructional activities, and continuing through the (3) post-assessment.
The task of designing a complete training course for learning disabilities is infinite; therefore, this "systematic approach" is meant to serve as a model for the building of training programs to meet locally specified objectives. This systematic model enables the trainer to design specific training for the desired objectives identified locally as being pertinent to the instructional process.

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BACKGROUND

The Merrimack Education Center is located in the northeastern part of Massachusetts, on the New Hampshire border, and serves 20 communities.

The area served by the Center is described as rural, suburban and urban. The Merrimack Education Center (MEC) is a collaborative of 20 contiguous communities in Massachusetts comprising approximately 5,000 teachers and 100,000 students. It was established in 1968 with Title III funds which provided for innovative supplementary educational centers. It is one of the largest cooperative centers in Massachusetts, and is a pioneer in the development of the "broker" concept in education.

As middleman to the communities it serves, the Center makes available educational resources beyond the capability of local districts. It helps identify and define educational needs, such as planning and programing or special training for teachers of handicapped students. It searches out resources from the area's leading educational institutions, government agencies, and industry. It then matches the two -- needs to resources -- on a cost-effective basis. It also provides a mechanism whereby local districts can cluster together to achieve economics of scale in purchasing services. And, it provides these things without sacrifice of local autonomy.

From an operational point of view, the Center assists client towns in developing innovative projects; in solving problems of curriculum, staffing, pupil and personnel services; in providing in-service professional and paraprofessional training, and in developing cultural and industrial resources. The Center also provides a readily accessible ERIC microfiche library system that gives educators working access to the latest research in education.

Organizationally, MEC is administered by an executive board of 10 superintendents. The town of Chelmsford serves as the local educational agency for the Center project. Operating intentionally lean, the Center staff consists of four full time professionals, several part time professionals, doctoral interns, and a secretarial staff. In addition, the Center brokers in noted educational consultants on a per diem basis for specific programs.

Essentially a grass roots organization, local financial participation in the support of the Center is one of its important features. Each district is able to maintain its own individuality through the customized efforts of MEC. No program is offered that is so rigid as to prevent easy modification in its adoption. The Center tries to fill the theory-into-practice or research application gap with tailor-made designs appropriate to individual districts. The professional standing of the Center is enhanced by its excellent relations with neighboring institutions of higher learning. Boston College, and Fitchburg State College grant credit for courses taken at MEC; Boston University and Boston College participate in Administrative Intern programs . . .

SUMMARY

The future of innovation in education is obscured because of reduced funds and support for creative programs. However, the broker concept developed at MEC in which it operates as an educational broker holds promise for developing new support for fostering programs to advance creative education.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

For an in-service program to be effective program planning must begin with significant inquiries. The most important data to be collected will be concerned with the needs which the staff members themselves perceive. The Merrimack Education Center has developed and incorporated an annual needs assessment process, based on formal and informal processes, around which it brokers programs.

The first annual needs assessment study, conducted by MEC in local schools, was administered in the Fall of 1970. Eighty-five percent of the teachers and administrators filled out a questionnaire based on current "buzz words" to identify their critical needs by school building and by town. Data from the updated needs assessment for 1971-72 was used in offering the in-service program in learning disabilities, a mini-course for local teachers. The needs assessment data indicated a great need for information in the area of learning disabilities.

SCOPE OF THE PROGRAM

An in-service "mini-course" of four sessions was offered to local teachers and administrators in the area of learning disabilities. The purpose of this learning disabilities mini-course was to increase the knowledge of information level in this field of study. Eighty local teachers and administrators participated in the course offering.

The specified objectives of the program were as follows:

1. To assist teachers in systematically observing and describing significant behaviors in children related to Learning Disabilities.

2. To familiarize teachers with identification of various learning disabilities (definitions, terminology, behavioral characteristics).

3. To assist teachers in considering the conditions under which success is possible for children with problems in learning.

4. To alert teachers to the necessity of providing individualized instruction for students with learning disabilities.

5. To demonstrate to teachers (through the operation of the mini-course) the model for building individualized learning programs.

PERSONNEL

The planning team for the mini-course consisted of the Acting Director of Special Education, the Specialist in Learning Disabilities (persons identified in local communities) and the Special Education Coordinator of the Staff of the Merrimack Education Center.

The instructional personnel for the mini-course consisted of the Merrimack Education Center Coordinator and a staff member of a local college from the area of learning disabilities.

PROCEDURES

Four hours (four weekly sessions) of intensive orientation and development of principles for teachers in the elementary grades were offered.

MODEL FOR BUILDING THE LEARNING PROGRAMS

Each participant filled out a one-page preassessment instrument at the first session of the mini-course.

Objectives for the mini-course were refined in terms of the data from the pre-assessment inventory.

Teachers participated in the four (one-hour) sessions geared towards the understanding of learning disabilities and the specific objectives delineated.

An evaluation procedure consisted of each participating teacher rating the mini-course on an output analysis scale to determine if the objectives established at the outset were attained.

PRE-ASSESSMENT

1. Please encircle the appropriate number on a scale from (1) to (4); one represents a need for further information and four representing no need for further information.

a.	assessment techniques and procedures	1	2	3	4
b.	psychomotor skills	1	2	3	4
c.	visual perception	1	2	3	4
d.	auditory perception	1	2	3	4
e.	communicative disorders	1	2	3	4
f.	reading disability	1	2	3	4
g.	language disability	1	2	3	4
h.	definition of learning disabilities	1	2	3	4
i.	terminology in learning disabilities	1	2	3	4
j.	observation and performance testing	1	2	3	4
k.	developing instructional programs	1	2	3	4
l.	principles of individualizing instruction	1	2	3	4
m.	determining appropriate educational objectives	1	2	3	4
n.	cognitive skills	1	2	3	4
o.	performing diagnostic evaluations	1	2	3	4

SCALE	1	4
	I need more information on instructional theories and methods.	I have sufficient information on theories and methods.

OUTLINE OF SESSION ONE

SUGGESTED MINI-COURSE ON LEARNING DISABILITIES

This outline provides for approximately four hours of in-service. It includes types of sessions, materials, activities, and references. The outline is divided into the following three major topics:

1. Introduction to terminology, definitions heterogeneous nature of the learning disabilities population.

2. Assessment of learning disabilities. (includes samples of tests used)

3. Strategies for learning disabilities. (two hours)

"An example of part of the course outline is given on the next page."

1. Introduction to definition, terminology, and various types of learning disabilities.

TOPICS	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS
Definitions Terminology Types of disabilities Characteristics Observation and Performance Testing.	Instructor explains design of workshop Transparencies showing various symptoms Discussion of terminology	Transparencies View I/D/E/A filmstrip on Performance Testing Myklebust Pupil Behavior Rating Scale MEC Glossary of terms
Assessment and diagnosis of learning disabilities The Educationally Oriented Evaluation 1. language 2. speech 3. academic 4. psychological	Discussion of structured observation (using Myklebust Rating Scale or Ozer checklist) Examination of tests in the following categories a. auditory skills b. visual skills c. psychomotor skills (gross motor and fine motor skills)	Transparencies showing types of tests. Test file in each of the areas Bibliography ...of books ...of tests
Resource materials for learning disabilities; classroom strategies; ideas for constructing and creating instructional materials	Teachers participate in each of the following: a. ERIC demonstration of microfiche pertaining to classroom programing b. examination of resource materials in l.d. c. discussion and development of instructional materials	Microfiche #ED # 050 904 # 043 153 032 703

EVALUATION: MINICOURSE ON LEARNING DISABILITIES 10/71

This questionnaire requires only a few minutes and is exceedingly valuable in planning future seminars. Your recommendations and suggestions will be taken into consideration in any future programs offered by the Merrimack Education Center in conjunction with local communities.

1. Position you now hold_____

2. Years of educational experience:

   a. 0 - 5 c. 11-15 e. 21-25

   b. 6-10 d. 16-20 f. over 25

3. Five objectives at the outset of this program are listed here in part three; please use this listing in responding to question

   a. assist teachers in observing and describing significant behaviors in pupils related to learning disabilities

   b. familiarize teachers with identification of various types of learning disabilities for referral to the learning disabilities specialist

   c. introduce teachers to observational and assessment devices (tests - both standardized and informal)

   d. assist teachers in considering the conditions under which success is possible for children with problems in learning

   e. alert teachers to the necessity of individualizing instruction applied to children with learning disabilities

4. Rank the five objectives in order of importance to you.

   (1 = Most important; 5 = least important

   _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
   1 2 3 4 5

5. Please encircle a numeral that indicates how well you feel this objective was accomplished:

	NOT AT ALL					EXTREMELY WELL
Objective A	1	2	3	4	5	6
Objective B	1	2	3	4	5	6

5. (continued)	NOT AT ALL					EXTREMELY WELL
Objective C	1	2	3	4	5	6
Objective D	1	2	3	4	5	6
Objective E	1	2	3	4	5	6

6. In your opinion, to what extent has this work-shop been helpful in the areas described below:

a. Understanding how and why children fail to learn	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. Referring pupils to the learning disabilities specialists	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. Understanding how learning disabilities can be "spotted in the classroom	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. Applying information to your teaching assignment	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. Understanding of learning disabilities as a special education field	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. Considering the special needs of children	1	2	3	4	5	6

7. To what degree do you now have

a. reinforcement for what you already know about learning disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. new information and/ or old information with new possibilities	1	2	3	4	5	6

8. What type of information needs do you see presently in the field of learning disabilities? What particular topics do you need more information on?_____

_____

9. What suggestions would you have for persons planning future minicourses?_____

_____

November 1971

A SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY
OF
ERIC DOCUMENTS PERTAINING TO
LEARNING DISABILITIES

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a National Information System operated by the United States Office of Education. ERIC serves the educational organization by disseminating educational research results and other resource information that can be used in developing more effective programs.

The Merrimack Education Center has over 50,000 of the documents from the ERIC Library available for the MEC region. Microfiche or hard copies of the complete documents cited in this bibliography are available through the local school system subscription with the information services of the Center.

This bibliography is a product of the information services of the Merrimack Education Center.

ED 042 499
The Modification of Teacher Behaviors which Modify Child Behaviors

ED 040 546
Central Processing Dysfunctions in Children. A Review of Research

ED 036 947
A Demonstration of Techniques in the Identification .? Diagnosis, and Treat ment of Children with Learning Disabilities

ED 037 841
Multi-Sensory Approach to Reading Disorders

ED 036 043
Everyone's Children

ED 036 041
A Sequentially Compiled List of Instructional Materials (ITPA)

ED 036 039
Developmental Patterns of Static Balance Ability and their Relation to Cognitive School Readiness

ED 036 035
Counseling and Psychotherapy with the Handicapped

ED 036 034
Grouping for Instruction

ED 036 021
Reading Methods and Problems

ED 036 014
The Slow Learner

ED 036 001
Minimal Brain Damage in Children

ED 035 138
Instructional Systems for Students with Learning Disabilities. Junior High School

ED 034 340
Individ: ual Learning Disabilities A Bibliography

LEARNING DISABILITIES

ED 051 630
Visual Education in the Primary Schools

ED 051 605
Psycholinguistic Learning Disabilities.
Diagnosis and Remediation.

ED 051 597
Learning Disabilities - Research:
Exceptional Child Bibliography Series.

ED 051 596
Learning Disabilities. Programs.
Exceptional Child Bibliography Series.

ED 046 999
Clinical Diagnostic Use of the WPPSI in
Predicting Learning Disabilities in Grade One

ED 050 916
Perceptual Motor Development and Reading
A Closer Look

ED 050 904
Teacher Manual in Visual-Motor-Perceptual
Training

ED 049 582
Behavioral Aspects of Learning Disabilities
Assessment and Remediation

ED 049 303
Perceptual Motor and Motor Performance Test
Batteries Developed for Pre-School Through
Grade Six Children

ED 046 189
Learning Disabilities
Implications for Medicine and Education

ED 044 436
EArly Screening and Task Learner
Characteristic Model of Prevention

ED 044 182
Review of Selected Early Educational
Research

ED 043 153
Learning Disabilities. In-service Training.

ED 033 75 7
Effect of Sensorimotor Activity on Perception and Learning in the Neurologically Handicapped Child

ED 033 526
Teaching through Sensorimotor Experiences

ED 033 522
Dyslexia

ED 033 517
Modalities Training File

ED 032 703
Handbook for Teachers of Children with Specific Learning Disabilities

ED 027 664
Minimal Brain Dysfunction
A New Problem Area for Social Work

ED 022 555
Games and Other Activities for Developing Language Skills

ED 018 345
Reading Diagnostic Approaches

ED 018 019
A Perceptual Training Program for Children with Learning Disorders.

ED 014 101
Day Treatment Program.; Approach to Children with SEvere Learning Disorders

ED 013 118
Preschool Prediction and Prevention of Learning Disabilities

ED 011 223
Beginning Reading Patterns and Preschool Emotional Problems

Mini-Course on Learning Disabilities

Merrimack Education Center

in cooperation with

Wilmington Public Schools

Concept:

Four hours (four weekly sessions) intensive orientation and development of teaching principles for teachers in the Elementary grades studying Learning Disabilities.

Objectives:

1. To assist teachers in systematically observing and describing significant behaviors in children related to Learning Disabilities.

2. To familiarize teachers with identification of various learning disabilities (definitions, terminology, behavioral characteristics).

3. Assist teachers in considering the conditions under which success is possible for children with problems in learning.

4. To alert teachers to the necessity of providing individualized instruction for students with learning disabilities.

5. To demonstrate to teachers (through the operation of the mini-course) the model for building learning programs.

Instructors:

Dr. Anne Kay - Fitchburg State College

Jean Sanders - Merrimack Education Center

Location:

Shawsheen School, Wilmington, Massachusetts.
Four consecutive Wednesdays from 2:00 - 3:00.

Procedures:

Each participating teacher will respond to items on a pre-assessment inventory.

Objectives for the mini-course will be refined in terms of the data from the pre-assessment inventory.

Teachers will participate in four (one-hour) sessions geared towards the understanding of learning disabilities and the specific objectives delineated.

A post-assessment instrument is administered to evaluate the mini-course.

Each participating teacher, in addition, will rate the mini-course on an output analysis scale to determine if the objectives established at the outset were attained.

RETRIEVAL TERMS DIRECTORY

for

ERIC Descriptors and Identifiers

Topic: Learning Disabilities

Listed in this document are the terms relevant to the indexing of professional materials in the field of Learning Disabilities. Entries are descriptors and identifiers, the "buzz words" in the area of learning disabilities.

Also included with the "buzz words" is a very short inventory of needs; what terms and concepts do you require more information about for successfully fulfilling your instructional role.

For more information regarding the descriptors and identifiers, consult the Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors for scope notes which define the terms, and clarify the usage or indicate selected similar terms.

The Merrimack Education Center has the entire ERIC Library (presently consisting of over 52,000 documents) available for the MEC region. Your response to the questionnaire on terminology will help us respond to your information needs.

Microfiche copies of complete documents are available through your local school system from MEC. The listing of descriptors used in ERIC will help you locate documents that might pertain to your interests.

DESCRIPTORS AND IDENTIFIERS

Learning Disabilities

Academic skills

Adjustment Problems

Affective behavior

Assessment

Attention span

Audiology

Auditory

Auditory-visual

Auditory perception

Auditory training

Autism

Behavior change

Behavior modification

Behavior rating scales

Behavioral disorders

Bibliotherapy

Brain Damage

Cerebral dominance

child development

Cognitive skills

Communication disorders

compensatory education

concept formation

coordination

Cultural differences

Crisis therapy

Decoding

Directionality

Diagnosis

Diagnostic Evaluation

Diagnostic testing

Diagnostic teaching

Discrimination learning

Drug therapy

Dyslexia

Echolalia

Education Assessment

Educational objectives

Educational diagnosis

Engineered classroom

Educationally handicapped

Educational therapy

Evaluation techniques

Exceptional children

Eye-hand coordination

Expressive language

Factor analysis

Failure factors

Spatial orientation

Speech correction

Tactile discrimination

Tactile-kinesthetic

Task analysis

Test interpretation

Time concepts

Therapeutic environment

Time factors

Tutorial instruction

Verbal communication

Visual-motor

Visual perception

SURVEY of INFORMATION NEEDS IN LEARNING DISABILITIES

Please encircle the appropriate number on a scale from (1) to (4); one represents a need for further information and four representing no immediate need for further information.

1 = high priority need for information
2 = mid-priority; on the high side
3 = mid-priority on the low side
4 = lowest priority need for information

I.	Assessment techniques and procedures	1 2 3 4
II.	Psychomotor skills	1 2 3 4
III.	Visual perception	1 2 3 4
IV.	Auditory perception	1 2 3 4
V.	Communicative disorders	1 2 3 4
VI.	Reading disabilities	1 2 3 4
VII.	Language disability	1 2 3 4
VIII.	Terminology in learning disabilities	1 2 3 4
IX.	Observation and performance testing	1 2 3 4
X.	Principles of individualizing instruction	1 2 3 4
XI.	Cognitive skills	1 2 3 4
XII.	Affective skills	1 2 3 4
XIII.	Diagnostic evaluation	1 2 3 4
XIV.	Bibliotherapy	1 2 3 4
XV.	Communicative disorders	1 2 3 4